

Appendix C



Interpretive Plan

Executive Summary

To assist in the completion of the Highland Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan, this Interpretive Plan guides our managers on how and what stories and concepts to tell visitors of the Monongahela National Forest as they travel across the Highland Scenic Highway. The foundations of this plan were developed from partner, public, and USDA Forest Service input. Through the implementation of the thematic approach to interpretation, the Forest hopes to reach out to both local communities and visitors to encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of the land's history and current management.

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Section I Introduction

As a jewel of the Monongahela National Forest, the Highland Scenic Highway draws visitors from around the country to enjoy the beautiful mountain vistas, clear water streams, and a wide array of recreational opportunities. Winding through the rugged terrain of the Allegheny highlands, the Highland Scenic Highway provides a glimpse into the past in one of the last areas to be timbered in the logging boom of the early half of the 1900s. This area is rich in history and folklore. The Forest tells the story of a vast, untouched wilderness, once destroyed by the axe, that has recovered to provide wildlife habitat, water, timber, forest products, as well as a place to escape everyday life.

The Highland Scenic Highway is a 43-mile route that traverses the southern portion of the Monongahela National Forest. It is located on both the Marlinton and Gauley Ranger Districts, primarily on Forest Service land (Figure 1). From Richwood, West Virginia, it follows WV 39/55 for 21 miles through the narrow valley along the North Fork of the Cherry River, climbs to the top of Kennison Mountain and continues onto the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center. From the Nature Center, the Highland Scenic Highway turns onto WV 150 and meanders across 22 miles of the area's highest ridges and plateaus before connecting with US 219, just 7 miles north of Marlinton, West Virginia.

Visitors can explore scenic areas, such as the Fall of Hills Creek and the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area. The Cranberry Glades Botanical Area is also listed as a National Natural Landmark. Fishing access is available on the streams and rivers that parallel the roadway. Other fishing opportunities are just off Highway at Summit Lake and the Williams River. As the eastern boundary of the Cranberry Wilderness, the Highland Scenic Highway provides several access points for those seeking solitude and adventure. Front country hiking and mountain biking are also found along the way. Scenic overlooks offer picnicking and broad views into picturesque, rural valleys below. Camping is offered at developed and dispersed recreation areas within a few minutes from the Highland Scenic Highway.

Additional recreation opportunities are available as the seasons change. The fall leaf season is one of the busiest times of the year, as the maple, yellow poplar, oak, and hickory showcase their vivid hues of reds, oranges, and yellows. It is also a very popular corridor to access favorite hunting spots. Unmaintained during the winter, the WV 150 section of the Highland Scenic Highway is the only place on the Monongahela National Forest where snowmobiles are allowed. Along with the snow-covered roadway, a modest trail system offer cross-country skiing and snow shoeing opportunities. There is also a significant amount of cross-country skiing on trails near the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center and Cranberry Glades Botanical Area.



Section 2 Interpretive Planning and Goals

Interpretation is...

‘an educational activity which aims to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (Tilden, 1957)’.

The goal of any interpretive material is to foster a connection between the land and the people use it. Through talks and presentations, signs and handouts, the goal remains the same—to help the public create an appreciation of the resource they use and a greater understand of its value to both the natural environment and society.

During the development of the Highland Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan (HSH CMP), the Monongahela National Forest (the Forest) realized a need to revisit, improve, and expand interpretive opportunities offered to the public. While several educational and interpretive opportunities exist along the Highland Scenic Highway (HSH), there are many stories to be told to connect visitors to the land they have come to explore and enjoy.

This interpretive plan will lay the framework for the improvement and development of historical and environmental education opportunities along the HSH. It will assist Ranger Districts to develop interpretive materials with consistent storylines, visual appearance, as well as accessibility. Visitors and local citizens alike will form a better appreciation for the Forest, its management, and the communities connected to it. By offering high-quality, appealing interpretive materials, there may be an increase in visitors to the area, improving tourism and economic development in nearby communities of Richwood, Hillsboro, and Marlinton, WV.

Goals of Interpretive plan:

- Use a thematic approach along the HSH to help create a ‘brand’ or identity for the route, allowing it to stand out among the surrounding landscape.
- Improve visitor understanding of plant biology, forestry, wildlife, geography, ecology, geology, and other natural sciences.
- Connect visitors to the land by telling stories of the Forest’s past, how it has recovered, and the multitude of services it provides to society.
- Foster an understanding of safety concerns, forest regulations, and outdoor ethics through clear and consistent information.
- Improve marketing of area attractions, as well as services available on the HSH and in nearby communities.
- Provide a variety of high-quality education opportunities to visitors regardless of age or ability.

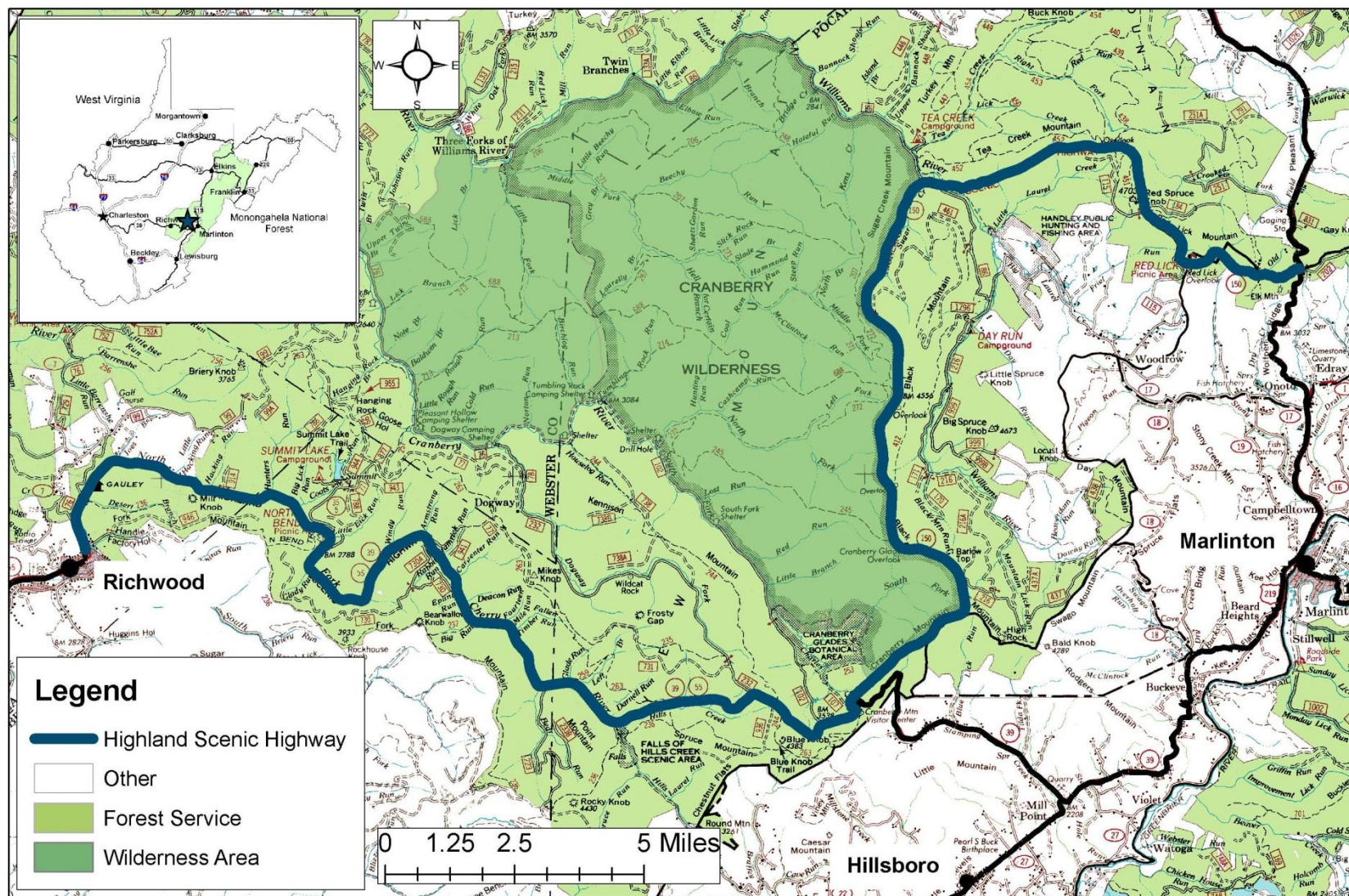


Figure I. Highland Scenic Highway Map



Section 3 Audience Analysis

Little data has been collected specifically for visitors of the HSH, though visitor logs are kept at the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center which is located on the HSH. Almost 3,500 visitors signed in during the 2012 season, which ran from mid-April through mid-October.

Approximately 63% of the visitors were from West Virginia, with the neighboring states of Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania having the next highest number of visitors signed in. Visitors also came from California, Colorado, and South Dakota, and from as far as Canada, and Denmark. The reasons people stated for visiting the area were primarily for sightseeing and recreation.



Figure 1. Fall foliage along the HSH

Activities that fall under sightseeing include viewing fall foliage, scenic drives, and visiting the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area. Recreational purposes include, but are not limited to, hiking, backpacking, camping, biking, birding, and fishing.

Reports from the Forest-wide National Visitor Use Monitoring (Kocis et al., 2004) study shed some additional light as to who is visiting the Forest. An understanding of who uses the area must be established to effectively communicate the thematic

storylines. Considerations of age ranges, group sizes, and amount of time spent are just a few examples of information needed to gauge when, how, and where interpretive displays should be developed.

Based on findings in the 2004 NVUM report, there were over 1 million national forest visits in FY2003. A 'National Forest Visit' is defined as: *the entry of one person upon a national forest to participate in recreation activities for an unspecified period of time. A National Forest Visit can be composed of multiple Site Visits.* Nearly three-quarters of visitors to the Forest were male (71%) and the majority of visitors were white (96%). Average group size was 2.43. Age was fairly evenly distributed, with about 40 percent reporting they were between the ages of 40 and 59. Persons under 16 represented another 16 percent.

The average visit duration was 20.9 hours on the Forest. Just below one-fifth of visitors reported staying overnight on the Forest. Visitors reported viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, relaxing, hiking/walking, and driving for pleasure as the top five activities they participated in during their National Forest visit. Fishing and participating in nature center activities were also notable activities reported by visitors. The most common 'facilities and specially designated areas' visited were forest roads, forest trails, scenic byways, wilderness, and



museums. Over three-quarters of visitors to the Forest reported that recreating on the Forest was the primary goal of their trip. When asked how many times they visit to participate in all the activities specified, the average visitor comes to the Forest 20.7 times over a 12 month period.

When asked about how important a variety of items were and their satisfaction with what they encountered during their time on the Forest, visitors were specifically asked about interpretive displays and the availability of recreation information. Visitors to developed day use areas rated interpretive displays as ‘important’ on a 5-point Likert scale, and 94 percent reported ‘good’ to ‘very good’ satisfaction levels. Similarly, these visitors rated recreation information availability as ‘important’ with 85 percent reporting ‘good’ to ‘very good’ satisfaction levels. Visitors at developed overnight sites placed these items at ‘moderate importance’ and just over three-quarters reported ‘good’ to ‘very good’ satisfaction levels.

Overall, this information tells us that there is significant use on the Forest by small groups of people that come to the Monongahela to enjoy the outdoors in a variety of settings. When they have an opportunity to learn through interpretation, they feel that what they encounter is satisfactory. The development of updated and improved interpretation can help visitors learn more, while forming a greater appreciation of the land that they return to time and time again. It can help lengthen visitors’ stay by offering more to see and learn on the HSH, at developed recreation sites along the way, as well as in nearby communities.

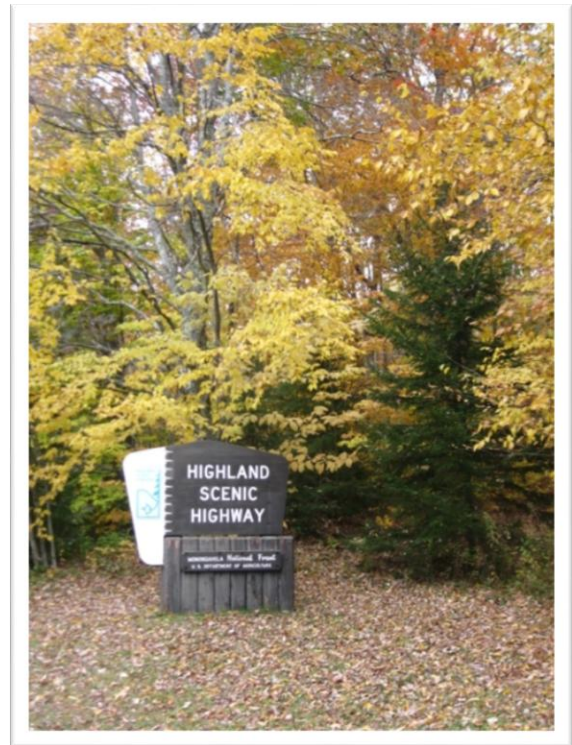


Figure 2. HSH portal sign at WV 39



Section 4 Existing Interpretive Sites

To understand what interpretation needs exist along the HSH, a brief history and description of opportunities currently offered is included here (Table 1).

Interpretive Trails

Several interpretive trails are located at scenic areas across the HSH. Conceptualized as part of the “Wayside Exhibit Plan for the Highland Scenic Highway” in 1993, the Black Mountain Fire Trail was completed in 1996. Other trails have developed over time, and include:

- Falls of Hills Creek
- Cranberry Glade Boardwalk
- Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail
- Mill Point Prison Site
- Black Mountain Fire Boardwalk
- Honeycomb Rocks Trail
- Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail



Figure 3. Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail

Signs and Kiosks

Although primarily for regulations and trail information, trailhead signs along the HSH often include some interpretive information about the trail or the area it traverses. Recently designed and installed trailhead displays at Red Spruce Knob Trail, Gauley Mountain Trail, and Williams River Trail include historical information related to the logging and post-logging era. High Rocks Trailhead is a dated sign that provides some interpretation about the geology of the rock formation and some avian species that may be seen along the trail. Other trailheads do not have an established trailhead sign at this time.

There is a three-panel kiosk at the US 219/WV 150 gateway to the HSH. One panel is dedicated to seasonal information (wildflowers, winter recreation). The main panel displays an overview map of the HSH, highlighted recreational areas, and stopping points. The Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Bureau (PCCVB) update the final panel with local events and tourist information.

Overlooks

Three of the four overlooks along the WV 150 section of the HSH have panoramic signs with interpretive information about the landscape and resources seen from their vistas. These signs were designed and implemented in 1994 based on the guidance provided in the “Wayside Exhibit Plan for the Highland Scenic Highway”, 1993.



Gauley Ranger District Office

At the Gauley Ranger District Office there is a three-panel kiosk that offers District recreation information, notices, area maps, and various brochures. The lobby area has a historical interpretation area developed in 2001. It includes many historical photos of Richwood during the early timber days, loggers, historic railroads, as well as New Deal era photos of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). USDA Forest Service-owned artifacts are on display. For a short time, additional items on loan from the Smithsonian were included in the display, but have been returned. There is also a large ‘Bear Aware’ display that educates visitors about proper food storage and practices to avoid negative encounters with black bears that frequent recreation sites.

Cranberry Mountain Nature Center

As the primary visitor center along the HSH, the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center (CMNC) offers a variety of interpretive services ranging from presentations, interactive displays, live animals, and self-guided exhibits. It is located near the mid-point of the HSH and is seasonally open from April to October.

Talks and Events

‘Snakes of West Virginia’ and guided tours of the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area are regular weekend programs. The CMNC also holds free events such as the Conservation Day/Kids’ Night and the Cranberry Shindig. During these events, local artisans setup demonstrations: blacksmithing, wood carving, wood turning/lathing, spinning thread, soap making, making apple cider, quilting, and many other traditional trades. Traditional music and dance is another highlight of the Shindig. Native orchids and backyard medicine programs have become annual events as well.

Self-guided, interactive exhibits

Throughout the CMNC, visitors can learn about wildlife, habitats, and many other topics related to the Forest. Exhibits found there are as follows:

Geography

- Relief map of the Gauley Ranger District centered on the Cranberry Wilderness and surrounding area (HSH included).
- Hand-made wall quilt displays a map of the entire forest.

Geology

- West Virginia’s Gemstone: Fossil Coral. Hands-on exploration of fossils.
- Sample of Forest soil, along with profile diagram.

Forest Health

- Forest pests. Panels describing forest health issues related to invasive pests: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and Emerald Ash Borer.



Wildlife

- Artificial animal scat display.
- Animal tracks: Visitors can make prints in the sand for many wildlife species found in the area.
- Twenty-one mounted wildlife species displayed in habitat scenery. Associated flip-books teach visitors about common species and their habitat.
- Fourteen birds of prey, a loon, a hummingbird, and red crossbill are on display.
- Live snake exhibit: Venomous and non-venomous snakes of West Virginia.
- Trout of West Virginia: Includes aquarium with live brook trout and an interpretive panel.
- Bear exhibit: Full-scale cutouts of polar, grizzly, and black bear with associated skulls.

Vegetation

- Wildflowers in bloom by season.
- Wildflower identification window clings of native species that can be found in gardens around the CMNC.

Miscellaneous

- Mystery boxes: Visitors reach inside box and try to guess the object they find.

Films

A variety of interpretive films are available for viewing at the Center. Topics include: wildflowers, Smokey Bear, Cranberry Glades Botanical Area, Snakes, Hummingbirds, Civilian Conservation Corps., and Mount Saint Helens.

Outdoor Interpretive Opportunities

The Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail is located steps away from the CMNC. It introduces visitors to many of the local tree species as it leads to a picnic spot at an overlook into the Stamping Creek watershed. The Virginian mountains are visible in the distance.

There is also a four-sided kiosk that offers area maps, information about forest notices, regulations, and upcoming local events. Native wildflower gardens around the complex teach visitors how to identify species on-site and the importance of planting native species.

**Table 1. Existing Interpretive Sites**

Location	Site Description	Interpretive themes or goals
Gauley Ranger District Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear Aware Kiosk • Small display area with interpretive information related to historic logging, railroads, and their impact on industry and the development of Richwood. Also stories about Civilian Conservation Corp. Also includes many artifacts from CCC and logging camps (2001). • Three-panel kiosk with general area information, maps, notices, and various brochures (2003). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information and visitor safety ◦ Wildlife ◦ Logging ◦ Post-logging
Summit Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single routed plastic sign, describing lake, stocking, a few basic regulations for lake use (2006). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Recreation
Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single routed cedar sign with short description of waterfalls and trail, as well as site map (mid-1990s). • Single-paneled sign describing the geology of waterfall formation (2007). • Single-panel laminate sign mounted in metal frame describing NNIS, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (~2008). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Forest health (NNIS)
Cranberry Glades Botanical Area Boardwalk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newer routed cedar sign at entrance with area history and description. • Large single-paneled kiosk with five inserts with boardwalk map, area plants, and ways to help protect the area. Seven small signs mounted in aluminum frame with glass located along 0.5 mile boardwalk (1990). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Ecological interpretation: wildlife, unique habitat, botany, history
Cranberry Mountain Nature Center (outdoor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four-sided information kiosk with maps, forest information, Nature Center events, Notices from USFS and WVDNR (2003). • Short, looping interpretive trail with introductions to thirteen tree/plant species, as well as historical description of the forest and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Natural resource management



Location	Site Description	Interpretive themes or goals
	a pictorial diagram of the Stamping Creek overlook (2007).	
Mill Point Prison Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretive trail (0.5 miles) created on an existing trail. Ten signs tell the story of the Mill Point Prison (2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-logging
High Rocks Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailhead display with trail information, the story of High Rocks, and birds to see along the way. Emergency contact information and area map (1990s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General area information Geology Wildlife
Williams River Valley Overlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-paneled panoramic view of the Williams River Valley. Diagram of places in view shed, establishment of MNF, and lineage of the Williams River to the Gulf (1994). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography Natural resource management Water resources
Big Spruce Overlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-paneled sign describing red spruce logging history. Also introduces the Black Mountain Fire and leads visitors to the interpretive trail (1994). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logging Post-logging (fire) Forest resiliency
Black Mountain Fire Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretive trail (600' boardwalk) with 7 small signs describing the logging history of the area, the Black Mountain fire (soil loss), and a recovering forest (1996). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logging Post-logging (fire) Influences on forest health
Williams River Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailhead display with trail information and story about the splash dam located there during the logging era. Emergency contact information and area map (2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General area information Logging
Honeycomb Rocks Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretive trail (0.25 miles) with 11 signs teaching visitors about the unique geology of the Honeycomb Rocks (2007). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geology
Little Laurel Overlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-paneled panoramic view of the valley, pointing out places in view shed. Also describes the MNF as a 'working' forest with forest management and grazing while providing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities (1994). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography Current timber practices, forest resiliency



Location	Site Description	Interpretive themes or goals
Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive trail (0.6 miles) with 6 signs describing the history of the meadow, habitat diversity, and wildlife. Two wildlife blinds are located along the boardwalk portion of the trail (2005). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Wildlife, water/wetlands, habitat
Gauley Mountain Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trailhead display with trail information and historic railroad logging. Emergency contact information and area map (2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Logging
Red Spruce Knob Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trailhead display with trail information and a historic account about the fire tower staffed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Post-logging: Fire tower and CCC
US-219 Gateway Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-paneled kiosk with seasonal forest information (winter recreation, wildflowers), a map of the HSH and area information, and local Convention and Visitors Bureau information (2002). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General area information ◦ Wildflowers



Section 5 Interpretive Theme and Subthemes

During the development of the HSH CMP, public meetings and letters to the public, area partners and businesses called for ideas pertaining to interpretive opportunities along the HSH. This input, as well as discussions during on-forest meetings, was used to establish the overall theme and subthemes for interpretation in this plan (HSH CMP, 2012).

The main theme that will be used to tie interpretation across the HSH is ***The Forest is Our Future*** (Figure 5). Many stories and ideas important to those who participated in the development of the theme and subthemes were related to the historical use and settlement of the area, how the forest has recovered and what resulted from historical use of the land, and what is being done now to shape what it will look like in the future, as well as the ecological benefits it will provide as time passes. Subthemes are outlined below (adapted from HSH CMP, 2012). Refer to this outline when reviewing the recommended themes.

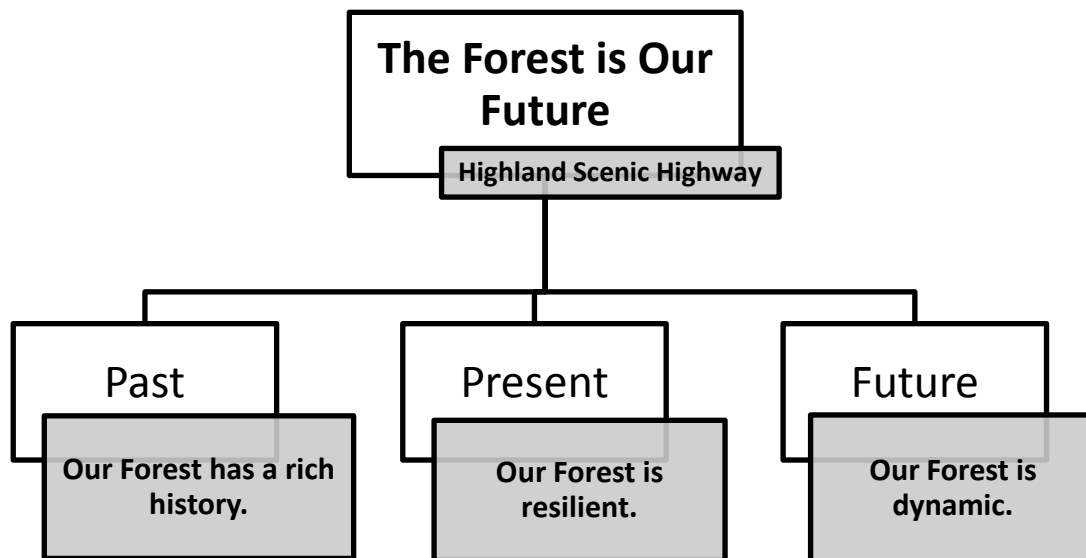


Figure 4. Theme and subthemes



1. Past: Our Forest has a rich history.

Storylines explore past uses and historic settlement in the area and how they were shaped by the surrounding forests and mountains.

- a) Historic Settlement: Subsistence farming, pastimes, and daily life in a remote mountainous area.
- b) Logging Era: Railroad logging, timber-based industry and manufacturing, logging camps and towns.
- c) Post-logging: Wildfire, fire suppression efforts, forest restoration, Mill Point Prison, and Civilian Conservation Corps.

2. Present: Our Forest is resilient.

Storylines explore how the forest is comprised of recovering ecosystems, subject to a variety of influences and management strategies.

- a) Influences: Environmental factors that can impact the forest such as weather, acid rain, natural succession, and elevation.
- b) Natural Resource Management: Current management practices for wildlife habitat improvement, managing for sensitive species, non-native invasive species, recreation, timber and more.
- c) Ecosystem Benefits: Benefits to environment and people such as air and water filtration, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, a variety of recreation opportunities/settings, quality of life, sensitive species, common wildlife, wildflowers, and tree identification.

3. Future: Our Forest is dynamic.

Storylines explore current forest trends and how they may shape our forests in the future, along with the challenges and benefits of change.

- a) Ecosystem Health: Issues that are impacting specific tree species, invasive pests and plants, as well as management strategies to address them.
- b) Water: Origins of several rivers are found in this high elevation area, provides habitat, fisheries, and water source for local communities.
- c) Geology: Site specific interpretation where appropriate, such as Falls of Hills Creek, Cranberry Glades Botanical Area, and Honeycomb Rocks.



Section 6 Interpretive Site Prioritization and Recommendations

The variety of storylines developed around the HSH allows managers to use a range of interpretive methods. Some storylines may be better suited for an audio tour or a brochure dedicated to that topic, while others should be shared through site-specific interpretive displays. To reach the greatest number of visitors, these stories should be offered through multiple media types. Accessible materials, such as large print and audio formats, should be available upon request.

In addition to prioritization of interpretation development at key sites along the HSH, high importance should be placed on the development of other materials, such as a HSH-dedicated website and audio tour built around subthemes. The website will be important not only for an additional outlet for interpretation, it will help market the intrinsic, scenic, and historical qualities of the HSH.

The recommendations within the CMP are locations and concepts that have been identified within the Forest Service, and from public meetings, for improving and enhancing interpretive opportunities associated with the HSH. The themes and subthemes provide a framework for future opportunities to be developed, yet be connected to a more comprehensive interpretive theme and visitor experience.

Prioritization

Existing site conditions, use patterns, proximity to other points of interest, and benefit to visitor experience were considered when determining the desired level of on-site interpretation. Priorities were established as 1, 2, or 3.

Priority 1: These are high profile sites with a well-developed infrastructure in place. They serve as portals or key destinations along the HSH.

Priority 2: These sites receive a substantial amount of use and have some infrastructure in place to support the development of more in-depth interpretation.

Priority 3: These sites include replacing interpretive information that was more recently installed and creating new interpretive opportunities at less prominent sites or locations.

Priority 4 Trailheads: Numerous trailheads are located in the HSH area. These represent additional opportunities to tie recreation to the HSH and incorporate interpretive material into trailhead signs.



The priorities are organized as such, that if funding were received for interpretation along the HSH, implementing recommendations for a Priority 1 site would be desirable before Priorities 2, 3, or Priority 4 Trailheads.

The site numbers are in sequential order starting from the western end of WV 39 travelling to the junction of WV 150 and US 219.

Site Recommendations

Priority 1

These are high profile sites with well-developed infrastructure in place. These sites serve as either a portal for visitor orientation to the HSH or key destination along the way. These priority sites should also include audio tour linked to the website.

The most important places to help develop the identity of the HSH are at the portal sites: *Gauley RD Office Kiosk, the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center, and the US-219 Gateway*. Visitors need to know where they are going, what they are travelling on, and why it will be memorable to them and their companions (Table 2).

Focus should then be turned to the high profile and key sites along the HSH: *Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area, Cranberry Glades Botanical Area, and the four scenic overlooks*. These sites are well-defined, offer amenities, and showcase a wide variety of scenic viewing opportunities. Already drawn to these areas for their spectacular beauty, interpretation needs to be updated to help visitors form a greater appreciation of the site, develop place attachment, and stir their curiosity about the development of the landscapes they are enjoying. For more detail regarding their existing condition information, see Table 1 Existing Interpretive Sites

Table 2. Priority 1 Sites

#	Site Name
1	Gateway Trailhead
2	Gauley Ranger District Office
8	Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area
11	Cranberry Glades Botanical Area
13	Cranberry Mountain Nature Center
19	Williams River Valley Overlook
22	Big Spruce Overlook
34	Little Laurel Overlook
39	Red Lick Overlook
41	US-219 Gateway

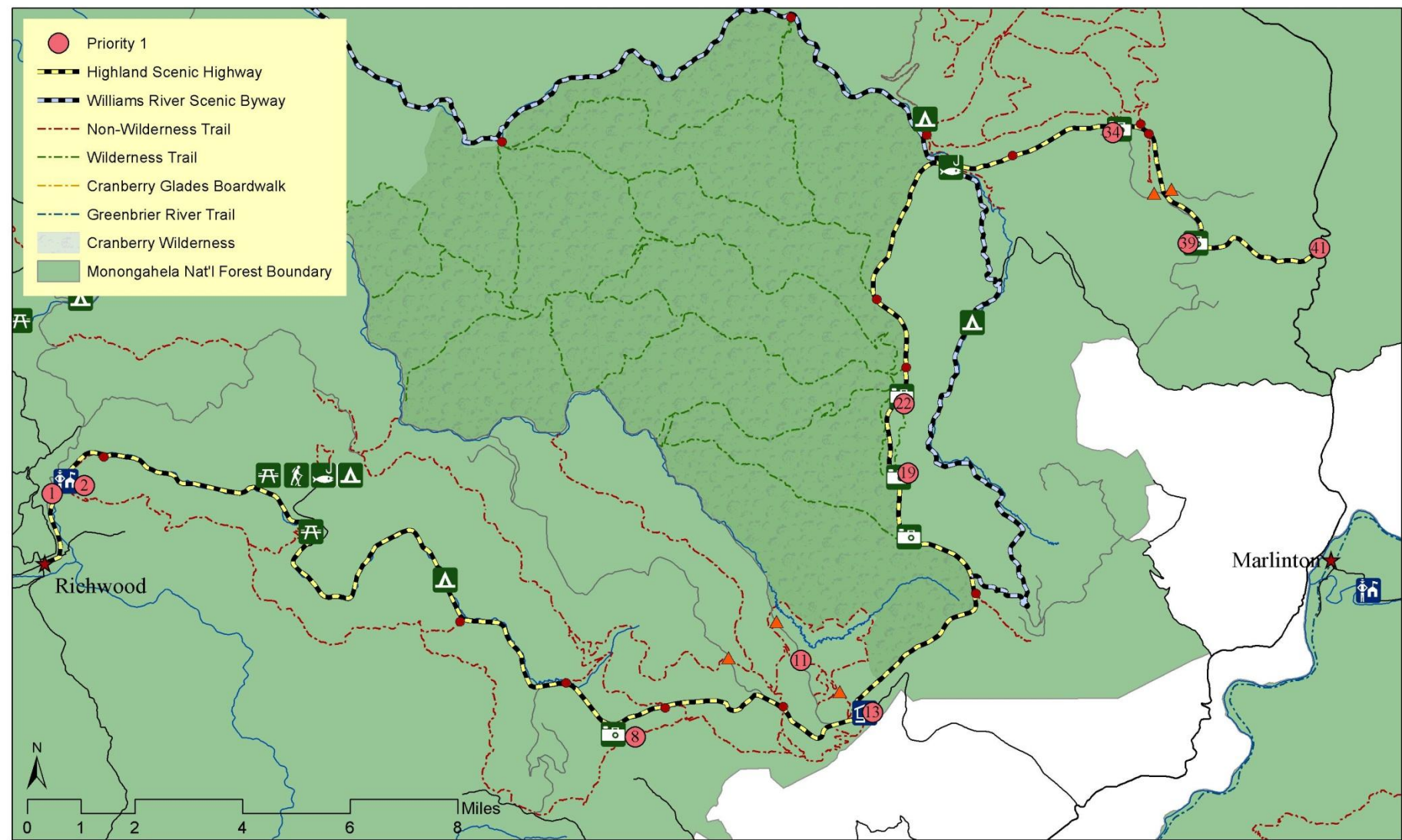


Figure 6. Geographic Location of Priority I Sites



Site 1: Gateway Trailhead

Topic: Recreation management is geared towards the safety and health/wellness of local residents/families that enjoy recreating close to home. A forest in recovery provides social and environmental benefits.

Themes: 2b Natural Resource Management, 2c Ecosystem Benefits, general orientation

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Be oriented and will know basic trail and emergency information,
- Discover nearby recreational opportunities on the National Forest
- Understand how the forest has recovered from past industrial logging practices and provides for continued economic, as well as social and environmental, benefits today

Existing condition: Existing undeveloped trailhead and trail access.

Desired condition: Trailhead sign orients visitors. Trailhead information includes a brief trail description, area map, emergency contact information, and Gauley District contact information.

Interpretive method recommendations: A double-panel, vertical trailhead display

List of graphic needs: Area map, photos of then and now.

Notes: While this site is not yet well-developed, funding is secured for the desired improvements. Once developed this will be a high profile site due to its location.

Site 2: Gauley Ranger District Office

Topic: The Gauley Ranger Station is a portal for visitors to the HSH. Outdoor information is available to orient visitors to the HSH, seasonal information and opportunities regarding the National Forest, and nearby attractions.

Themes: All, general orientation

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Be oriented with the HSH and attractions along the way
- Gain a greater understanding of National Forest regulations
- Inform visitors about local events and opportunities on the Forest and in nearby communities
- Appreciate the year-round opportunities on the National Forest

Existing condition: Extensive indoor interpretive displays. Existing outdoor three-panel kiosk is in need of replacement and is outdated.



Desired condition: No recommendations for indoor interpretation. The outdoor three panel kiosk is replaced with a tri-fold design and has updated orientation and interpretive information. The center panel should be developed to offer visitors an overview map of the HSH, attractions along the way, as well as general information/regulations (currently being developed). One panel should offer an introduction to the themes and subthemes that will tie their scenic drive together. One panel should be dedicated to information about local events/festivals, special notices, and seasonal changes across the Forest (winter recreation, fall colors, wildflowers, wildlife, and so on).

Interpretive method recommendations: Three signs needed for the three panel kiosk.

List of graphic needs: HSH map and nearby attractions, photos relevant to themes/subthemes, seasonal images/information.

Notes: Orientation signs should be consistent with CMNC and the 219 Gateway. Coordinate with Richwood Chamber of Commerce for local event information. These panels should be created for the dimensions of the tri-fold information board at the CMNC, as well as the US-219 Gateway.

Site 8: Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area

Topic: A series of interpretive signs focus on geology, the unique vegetation that thrive near the falls, and the movement of surface and subsurface water. Hemlock wooly adelgid threatens the health of nearby eastern hemlock trees.

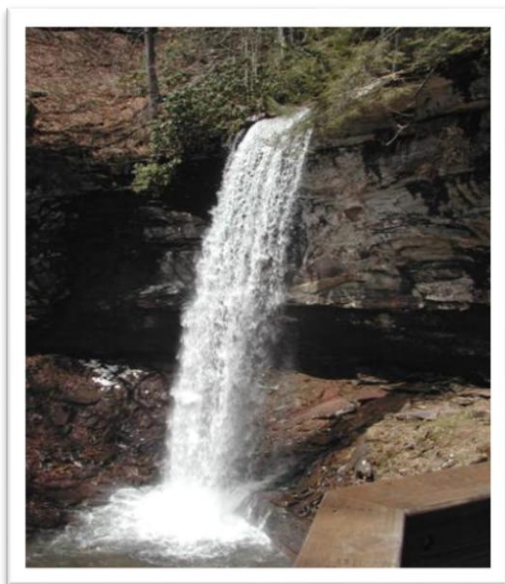


Figure 7. Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area

Themes: 3a Ecosystem Health, 3b Water, 3c Geology

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn how geologic forces created and shaped the Falls
- Gain an understanding of surface and subsurface water flow, and how the water from the Falls travels to the Greenbrier River
- Understand the importance of the eastern hemlock and the threat of the hemlock wooly adelgid
- Appreciate the unique vegetation that grows near the Falls

Existing condition: Some of the signs are outdated

Desired condition: Updated information is accurate



and signs meet media design guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive trail, three panel kiosk, brochure, and audio tour

List of graphic needs: Some existing graphics can be used, some need to be replaced

Notes: Hemlock wooly adelgid sign replacement should be in partnership with USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area

Site 11: Cranberry Glades Botanical Area

Topic: Cranberry Glades Botanical Area and National Natural Landmark protect the largest area of bogs in West Virginia. Because of its unique conditions, some unusual plants grow in fens (commonly called bogs), including carnivorous or insect-eating plants.

Themes: 2a Influences, 2b Natural Resource Management, 3c Geology

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn what a bog is and how it formed
- Gain an understanding of the hydrology and geology of the area
- Appreciate the unique vegetation that grows in the Cranberry Glades

Existing condition: Existing trailhead information board and interpretive trail signs are outdated and in poor condition.

Desired condition: Updated information is accurate and signs meet media and architectural guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive trail, trailhead information board, brochure, and audio tour

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics with new as appropriate

Notes: As a National Natural Landmark, the associated logo should be incorporated on the entrance information board (Figure 11). Ensure consistency across media types. The trailhead information board should be replaced with a two-panel kiosk shown in Figure 23 of the HSH CMP. Individual interpretive sign at stops along the boardwalk should be replaced with small angled interpretive displays of similar dimensions.



Figure 8. National Park Service's National Natural Landmark logo



Site 13: Cranberry Mountain Nature Center

Topic: This portal site welcomes people to the HSH. Information and opportunities along the HSH and the surrounding National Forest, general Forest regulations and information, nearby attractions, and local events are provided.

Themes: All, general orientation

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Be oriented with the HSH and attractions along the way
- Gain a greater understanding of National Forest regulations
- Inform visitors about local events and opportunities on the Forest and in nearby communities
- Appreciate the year-round opportunities on the National Forest
- Discover the extent of trails that are in the vicinity, both within walking distance and nearby

Existing condition: Extensive indoor interpretive displays. Existing outdoor four-sided information board is in poor condition and outdated.

Desired condition: No recommendations for indoor interpretation at this time. A tri-fold design should be used to replace the existing information board. Orientation signs should be consistent with Gauley Ranger District Office and the 219 Gateway.

Interpretive method recommendation: Signs needed for the kiosk.

List of graphic needs: HSH map and nearby attractions, photos relevant to themes/subthemes, seasonal images/information

Notes: Coordinate with PCCVB for local event information. Kiosk panels should be created for the dimensions of information board at the Gauley Ranger District Office, as well as the US-219 Gateway. Three panels will be dedicated to HSH, the other side of which will pertain to CMNC.

Site 19: Williams River Valley Overlook

Topic: Looking over the Williams River Valley is looking into the foundation of rivers.

Themes: 2c Ecosystem Benefits, 3b Water

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Understand how forest management practices affect streams and rivers
- Gain a greater understanding of how fisheries and wildlife depend on forest management
- Be informed of the distances (bird's flight) to features/mountains in the viewshed



Figure 9. Williams River Valley Overlook

- Appreciate how forest management actions can influence what happens downstream, including providing recreation and water source for communities

Existing condition: Single interpretive panel sign and parking access for the Black Mountain Trail.

Desired condition: Single sign is updated and meets media and architectural guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Single angled interpretive panoramic sign.

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics

Notes: Because this site is also an access point to the Black Mountain Trail (TR 412) that loops along the ridge to the Big Spruce Scenic Overlook, a separate interpretive display about differences in managing wilderness and non-wilderness areas will be included on-site. Refer to the Trailheads section for more detailed information.

Site 22: Big Spruce Overlook

Topic: History and restoration of the red spruce ecosystem and contrast between past and current resource management.

Themes: 1b Logging Era, 1c Post-logging, 2b Natural Resource Management

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Understand how USDA Forest Service ownership and management has shaped the forest they see today
- Gain a greater understanding of the red spruce ecosystem and its historic distribution
- Learn about the wildlife whose habitat includes or relies on the red spruce ecosystem

Existing condition: Single angled interpretive panel sign.



Desired condition: Single sign is updated and meets media and architectural guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Single angled interpretive panoramic sign.

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics

Notes:

Site 34: Little Laurel Overlook

Topic: The patchwork landscape provides diverse vegetation and wildlife habitat.

Themes: 2b Natural Resource Management

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Have a greater understanding of the forest patterns they are viewing
- Learn about how forest diversity provides a variety of wildlife habitat

Existing condition: Single angled interpretive panel sign.

Desired condition: Single sign is updated and meets media and architectural guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Single angled interpretive panoramic sign.

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics

Notes: A choropleth map developed in ArcGIS could depict this idea well. Refer visitors to the Tea Creek Meadow Trail for a closer look at two very different habitats and how they are linked.

Site 39: Red Lick Overlook

Topic: Natural influences on forest development.

Themes: 2a Influences, 2c Ecosystem Benefits

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about the viewshed, feature names and distances
- Understand how natural factors such as aspect, weather, elevation and geology influence forest development and species composition

Existing condition: No sign.

Desired condition: Single angled panoramic interpretive sign meets media and architectural guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Single angled interpretive panoramic sign.



List of graphic needs: Panorama of viewshed

Notes: Consistent with other overlook signs.

Site 41: US-219 Gateway

Topic: Outdoor information orients visitors to the HSH, the surrounding National Forest, and nearby attractions.

Themes: All, general orientation

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Be oriented with the HSH and attractions along the way
- Gain a greater understanding of National Forest regulations
- Inform visitors about local events and opportunities on the Forest and in nearby communities
- Appreciate the year-round opportunities on the National Forest
- Realize the extent of trails that are in the vicinity
- Winter visitors will be informed of the variety of snow-based recreation along the HSH

Existing condition: Existing kiosk is in good condition. Center panel and PCCVB panel need to be updated.

Desired condition: The center panel provides an overview map of the HSH, attractions along the way, as well as general information/regulations (currently being developed). PCCVB provides one panel of information about local events/festivals, lodging information, and nearby attractions. One panel provides seasonal information relating to the Forest (winter recreation, fall colors, wildflowers, wildlife, and so on), special notices, and Wilderness. Orientation signs should be consistent with Gauley Ranger District Office and the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center.

Interpretive method recommendation: Signs needed for the kiosk.

List of graphic needs: HSH map and nearby attractions, photos relevant to themes/subthemes, seasonal images/information

Notes: Coordinate with PCCVB for local event information. Kiosk panels should be created for the dimensions of the four-sided information board at the CMNC, as well as the Gauley Ranger District Office.



Priority 2

These are sites that receive a substantial amount of use and have some infrastructure in place to support the development of more in-depth interpretation. Additional print materials (visitor's guide, brochures, tear-off maps, etc.) should be designed and printed as funding allows.

The sites to address first in this section receive significant use and have the infrastructure to support the development of an interpretive site (Table 3, Figure 12). Offering interpretation at *Summit Lake Recreation Area and North Bend Picnic Area* will help better establish the identity of the HSH along WV 39. Three interpretive trails listed here need only a fresh look, minor corrections, and updating to be consistent with the media design guidelines—*Cranberry Glades Overlook Trail, Black Mountain Fire Trail, and Tea Creek Meadow*. The *fishing pier* at the Williams River/HSH junction has historical, wildlife, and recreational significance.

Other interpretive opportunities are recommended for Undeveloped Pull-off on WV 150, the Williams River Trail, and at the Shearer Run South Grazing Allotment.

Table 3. Priority 2 Sites

#	Site Name
4	Summit Lake Recreation Area
5	North Bend Picnic Area/North Bend Trail
17	Cranberry Glades Overlook Trail
23	Black Mountain Interpretive Trail
26	Williams River Fishing Pier
32	Williams River Trail
35	Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail

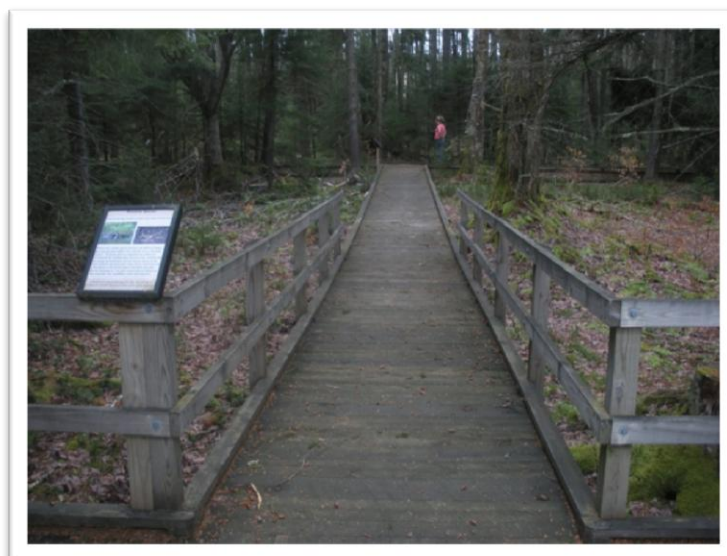


Figure 10. Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail

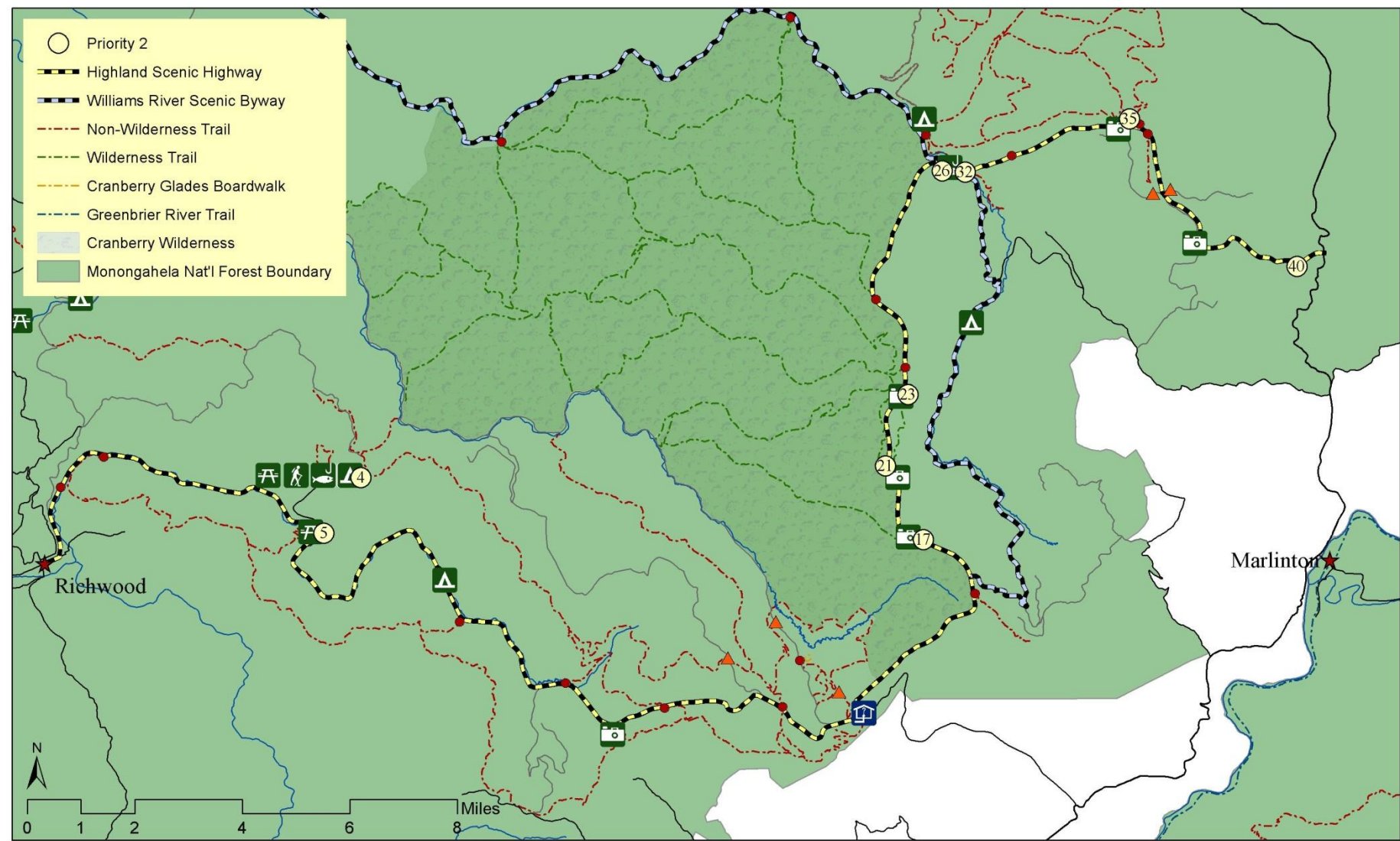


Figure 11. Geographic Locations of Priority 2 Sites



Site 4: Summit Lake Recreation Area

Topic: Conservation and management of water resources is important to wildlife and people.

Themes: 2 Present, 3 Future

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about purpose and need for the liming efforts by WVDNR on Coats Run, the main stream that feeds Summit Lake
- Understand the connection between liming efforts, water chemistry, and fishing habitat
- Appreciate the careful management of Summit Lake as a water reservoir for Richwood, WV
- Improve knowledge of common wildlife and vegetation around Summit lake
- Be aware of area information and basic regulations
- See a food web common to water and forest ecosystems, similar to that found at Summit Lake



Figure 12. Summit Lake

Existing condition: Double-sided multi-panel information board located near parking area.

Desired condition: Interpretive signs are located along Summit Lake Trail, information board panels are updated.

Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive trail, double sided single-panel to be installed on information board at parking area

List of graphic needs: None, see notes.

Notes: Forest Service is developing interpretive signs to locate along the Summit Lake Trail and the double sided single panel and will apply new media design guidelines.

Site 5: North Bend Picnic Area/Trailhead

Topic: Long before this was National Forest picnic area, a historic logging settlement covered the site.

Themes: 1 Past

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about the historic settlement at North Bend



- Gain an appreciation for how the early timber industry shaped the land and economy of the area, including nearby Richwood, WV

Existing condition: Parking, restroom, picnic area.

Desired condition: Two interpretive signs are located in the general use area.

Interpretive method recommendation: Two interpretive signs, audio tour

List of graphic needs: Historic photos of North Bend settlement, logging, and railroad operations.

Notes: Gauley District has historic map.

Site 17: Cranberry Glades Overlook Trail

Topic: The vista overlooks two unique and protected areas: the Cranberry Wilderness and the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area.

Themes: 2b, 2c, 3b, 3c

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about what a congressionally designated Wilderness area is, what protection it affords, and how it impacts the public and land management
- Gain an understanding of the hydrology and geology of the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area

Existing condition: Parking, trail, vista.

Desired condition: Interpretive signs are mounted to the railing at the vista

Interpretive method recommendation: Two interpretive signs

List of graphic needs: Photos from overlook, geology and hydrology examples at the Glades

Notes: Refer visitors to the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area to learn more.

Site 23: Black Mountain Interpretive Trail

Topic: History of the Black Mountain Fire and subsequent restoration.

Themes: 1b Logging Era, 1c Post-logging

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about the Black Mountain Fire and conditions that led to it
- Understand the relationship between historic logging and subsequent wildfires



- Realize the role that the Civilian Conservation Corps played in fire suppression and restoring the forested landscape

Existing condition: Interpretive signs along wooden boardwalk

Desired condition: Interpretive signs meet media and architectural design guidelines

Interpretive method recommendation: Replace signs to meet media and architectural guidelines

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics

Notes: None

Site 26: Williams River Fishing Pier

Topic: The Williams River area has received a variety of uses over time, and will continue to be important in the future.

Themes: All

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will learn the following, as specific to the Williams River area

- Past: Historical logging, the site of a splash dam and its influence on the river's development.
- Present: Use for recreation, issues for management, non-native invasive species, fisheries, wildlife, WV DNR stocking
- Future: Ecological restoration, further development of recreation, and continued enjoyment by the public

Existing condition: Existing pullout for fishing and access point to travel to nearby recreation sites

Desired condition: Multiple interpretive panels, arranged in a timeline fashion. Timeline brings visitors through the past, present and future of the Williams River and the surrounding area.

Interpretive method recommendation: Multiple panels, audio tour

List of graphic needs: No existing graphics, various needs

Notes: This site is a major junction of the Williams River Scenic Byway (FR 86) and the HSH. Many visitors stop to use the facilities, access the Williams River for fishing, and to travel to nearby recreation sites.

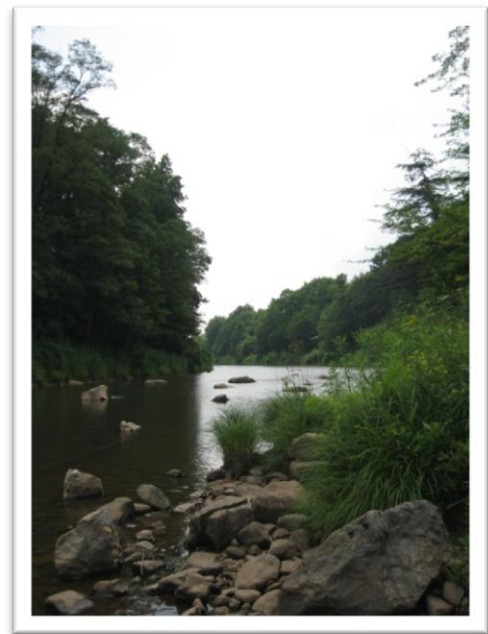


Figure 13. Williams River at the Fishing Pier



Site 32: Williams River Trail

Topic: The Williams River, and Deadwaters area, provide riparian and aquatic habitat to a variety of waterfowl, birds of prey, bats, and insects.

Themes: 2b Natural Resource Management

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about common species of water fowl, birds of prey, and insects
- Gain knowledge about riparian and water ecology

Existing condition: Trail with duck boxes

Desired condition: Multiple small interpretive sign grouping along the Deadwaters



Figure 14. Williams River Deadwaters

Interpretive method recommendation: Multiple signs/interpretive trail

List of graphic needs: Photos or images of applicable wildlife species and/or their habitat type.

Notes: Along the Williams River Trail from the HSH trailhead, the Youth Conservation Corp installed duck boxes during the summer of 2012. Small interpretive signs should be installed adjacent to the Deadwaters section of the river.

Site 35: Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail

Topic: Meadow habitat and forest habitat provide homes for a variety of plants and animals.

Themes: 2b, Natural Resource Management, 2c Ecosystem Benefits

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about meadow habitat and forest habitat communities
- Understand the long term influence that an old beaver dam has had on the landscape

Existing condition: Interpretive trail and boardwalk with signs

Desired condition: Update interpretive message in the upper section of trail to focus on meadow habitat community, improve accuracy from current message. Maintain boardwalk focus on forest habitat communities.



Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive trail

List of graphic needs: Incorporate appropriate existing graphics, may need additional images

Notes: While this trail was well-developed and the interpretation does a great job of telling visitors about the variety of habitats found throughout the Monongahela, some of the information is no longer accurate. See the below beaver pond that has since dried up.

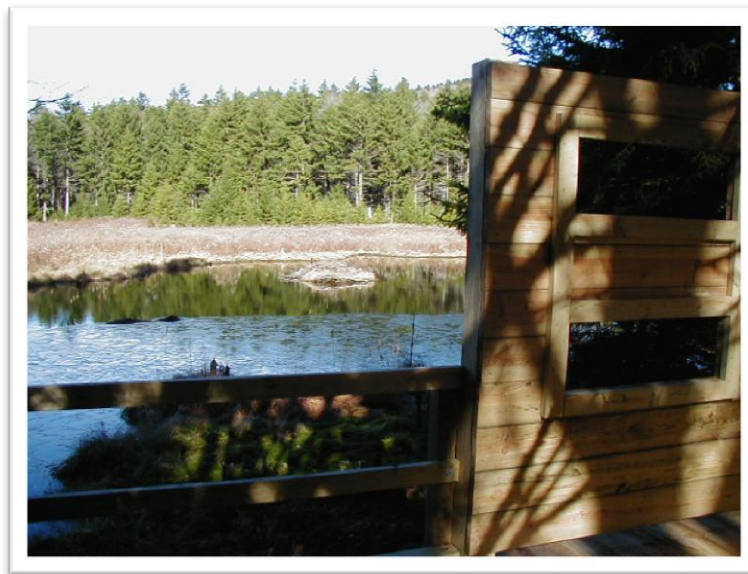


Figure 15. Beaver Pond on Tea Creek Interpretive Trail 2002

Priority 3

These sites include replacing interpretive information that was more recently installed and creating new interpretive opportunities at less prominent sites or locations. Interpretation at *Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail*, *Mill Point Prison Interpretive Trail*, and *Honeycomb Rocks Interpretive Trail* was more recently installed and is still in good condition. Work to be done includes replacement to fit the thematic color schemes/layouts and then the development of some new interpretive opportunities (see Table 4). Additional planning will be required for interpretive trails at *Day Run and Tea Creek Campgrounds*. While these are not priority sites, specific site plans and NEPA (as required) should be completed as realistically as possible so that when funding becomes available, the new interpretive trails can be implemented. Funding can be more easily attained through grants and partnerships with completed pre-work.



Table 4. Priority 3 Sites

#	Site Name
14	Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail
15	Mill Point Prison Interpretive Trail
21	Undeveloped pull-off on WV-150
27	Day Run Campground
28	Tea Creek Campground
33	Honeycomb Rocks Interpretive Trail
40	Shearer Run South Grazing Allotment

Site 14: Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail

Topic: Walk through the forest and learn about your surroundings through visual and tactile signs located along the trail.

Themes: 2c Ecosystem Benefits

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Read and touch tree identification signs that provide an introduction to the great variety of tree species found in this area
- Appreciate trees for their multitude of purposes, ecologically and for human benefit
- Learning interesting past and present uses of tree species along the trail



Figure 5. Black Cherry Sign along the Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail

Existing condition: Tree identification signs and descriptions located along accessible trail. Some of the signs are inaccurate.

Desired condition: Replace, when needed or funded, to meet recommended media and architectural design guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive trail.

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics.

Notes: Corrections and updated information were given by the Forest Ecologist and are located in the project record.

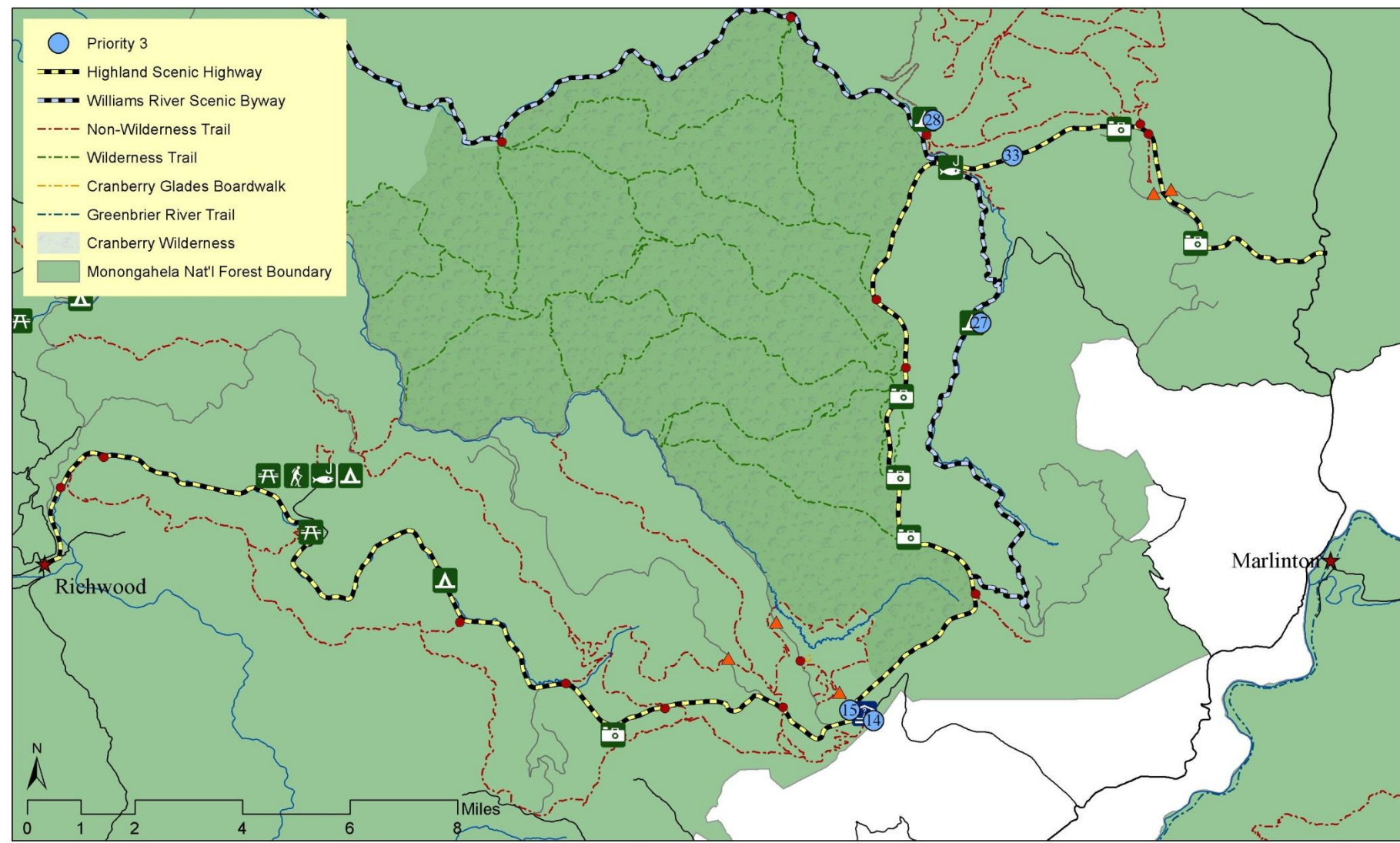


Figure 17. Geographic Locations of Priority 3 Sites



Site 15: Mill Point Prison Interpretive Trail

Topic: The historic Mill Point Prison had no walls, yet contained over 6,000 prisoners from 1938-1959.



Figure 6. Installed interpretation along the Mill Point Interpretive Trail.

Themes: 1c Post-logging

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about the prisoners and daily life at the unique Mill Point Prison
- Appreciate and understand the reason behind the remote location for this minimum security facility
- Discover the historic extent of prison infrastructure

Existing condition: Interpretive signs and trails.

Remnants of prison infrastructure, such as stairs and a well.

Desired condition: Media and architectural designs meet guidelines. Language is accessible to variety of visitors. Trail is accessible.

Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive signs, audio tour topic

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics.

Notes: To ensure that persons of all abilities have the opportunity to enjoy this history site, the development of an accessible route to the Mill Point Prison Site should be completed as funding and personnel time allows.

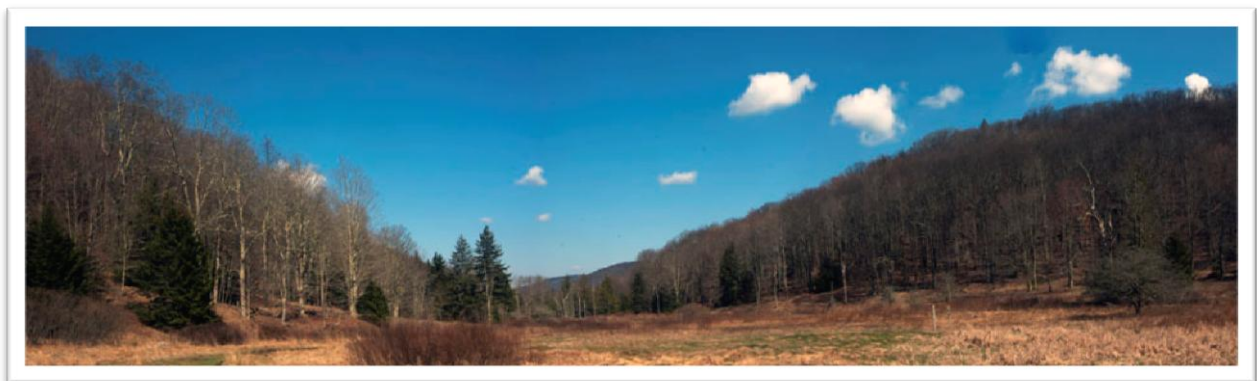


Figure 19. Mill Point Prison Site



Site 21: Undeveloped pull-off on WV-150

Topic: History and geology of the rock field that dominates this site.

Themes: 1c Post-logging, 3c Geology

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Learn about the history and geology of the surrounding rock field

Existing condition: Parking area.

Desired condition: Interpretive panel and picnic site adjacent to parking area, overlooking rock field .

Interpretive method recommendation: Single interpretive sign.

List of graphic needs: Historic wildfire photos, geology diagram

Notes: Refer visitors to the Black Mountain Trail to learn more. Refer to Appendix B Planting Site Designs for parking and planting recommendations.

Site 27: Day Run Campground

Topic: The area surrounding Day Run Campground has an interesting and long history of settlement, resource management and recreational use.

Themes: All

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Foster an appreciation for the history and management of the campground and surrounding forest
- Learn about early settlement, past logging, and current natural resource management practices
- Have an opportunity for further exploration of the National Forest around the campground
- Learn that the Williams River and surrounding area have been used for relaxation and recreation for a long time

Existing condition: Developed campground and parking area.

Desired condition: 1/4 mile looping accessible interpretive trail.

Interpretive method recommendation: Multiple interpretive signs for trail

List of graphic needs: Historic logging, settlement or recreation photos, area map



Notes: To offer recreational use of the area when the campground is gated and closed, a small 2-3 vehicle parking area should be established. This would also allow day-use parking and an access point for visitors wanting to explore the interpretive trail and the Williams River.

Site 28: Tea Creek Campground

Topic: Tea Creek Campground and the surrounding area was once the site of an active logging camp and associated operations.

Themes: All

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Foster an appreciation for the history and management of the campground and surrounding forest
- Learn about the long-term logging camp that was located where the campground lies
- Gain an understanding of early settlement life and culture along the Williams River
- Learn about the Tea Creek Fire
- Learn about life and management after logging ended, such as work by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and development of backcountry trails
- View the Williams River watershed and associated topography

Existing condition: Developed campground and parking area.

Desired condition: Short, looping accessible interpretive trail.

Interpretive method recommendation: Multiple interpretive signs for trail

List of graphic needs: Historic photos of logging camp, CCC, railroad operations. Map of Williams River watershed and topography

Notes: Signs should tell the stories related to the long-term logging camp, early settlement life and culture along the Williams River, the logging history and use of railroads to transport logs down-river to large mills, and the Tea Creek Fire that blazed through the area afterwards. A brief illustration of the work of CCC on backcountry trails.



Site 33: Honeycomb Rocks

Interpretive Trail

Topic: Honeycomb Rocks is a spectacular example of a unique geologic pattern.

Themes: 3c Geology

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Understand the factors that contributed to the formation of the Honeycomb Rocks
- Learn about the various stages of development of the hematite box work pattern



Figure 7. Interpretive Signs at Honeycomb Rocks

Existing condition: ½ mile accessible interpretive trail.

Desired condition: Signs meet media and architectural guidelines.

Interpretive method recommendation: Interpretive trail.

List of graphic needs: Incorporate existing graphics.

Notes: When replacing, some of the language should be reviewed and made more accessible to the general public. This is an outstanding interpretive site along the HSH.

Site 40: Shearer Run South Grazing Allotment

Topic: Grazing is a continued historic use that has many benefits.

Themes: 1a Historic Settlement, 2b Natural Resource Management

Objective: As a result of this exhibit, visitors will

- Realize that the historic use dates back to before the area was National Forest
- Gain knowledge about historic settlement and agriculture in the area
- Understand how grazing is a historic use that is practiced on many federal lands
- Learn how grazing is used as a tool to maintain wildlife openings

Existing condition: No infrastructure or pullout. Allotment visible from HSH.

Desired condition: Inform visitors of this distinctly open landscape.

Interpretive method recommendation: Single sign, audio tour topic



List of graphic needs: Historic and current photos of allotment.

Notes: This would be a great opportunity for an audio tour or a paragraph in a brochure. It may be difficult to establish safe pullout for a sign.

Priority 4 Trailheads

Although not specifically an interpretive site, trailhead signs can also offer visitors some of information about the area they are about to explore (Table 5). These signs should include consistent information: a brief trail description, an area map highlighting the trail, District contact information, and basic emergency contact information. One brief interpretive section should be added to help visitors form a connection to the theme and subthemes of the HSH. A single-panel, or double-panel (if appropriate), vertical information board should be used to display signage. All trailhead displays should have the HSH logo placard installed just below the base of the display board on the right support post.

Future trailhead development and displays to consider are included here, but have a lower priority than other sites. Site planning will be required for *Big Run Trailhead* and *Thomas Reserve Trailhead*. An interpretive display should be developed for *Black Mountain Trailhead* at the Williams River Valley Overlook. Suggested interpretive storylines for all other trailheads with developed parking along the HSH are included here. Currently, these trailheads have no signage.

Through the design efforts of recent AmeriCorps volunteers, newly developed Wilderness displays are ready to be installed. Newer trailhead displays have been installed at *Williams River Trailhead (HSH)*, *Gauley Mountain Trailhead*, and *Red Spruce Knob Trailhead*. Replacement of existing signs and displays listed here are to be completed as needed.



Table 5. Priority 4 Trailhead Sites

Location Number	Site	General Info & Theme
3	Fork Mountain Trailhead	2 b
6	Big Run Trailhead	1 b
7	Eagle Camp Trailhead	1 c
9	Pocahontas Trailhead (WV-39 access)	3 c
10	Kennison Mountain Trailhead	2 a & 2 b
12	Thomas Reserve Trailhead	
16	High Rocks Trailhead	3 c
18	Forks of Cranberry Trailhead	2 c
20	Black Mountain Trailhead (Williams River Overlook and Big Spruce Overlook)	2 b
24	North-South Trailhead	1
25	North Fork Trailhead	1
29	Williams River/Tea Creek Trailhead	1 a & 1 c
30	Bannocks Shoals Trailhead	1 b & 1 c
31	Williams River Trailhead (HSH)	1
36	Tea Creek Mountain/Right Fork of Tea Creek Trailhead	1 c
37	Gauley Mountain Trailhead	1
38	Red Spruce Knob Trail	1

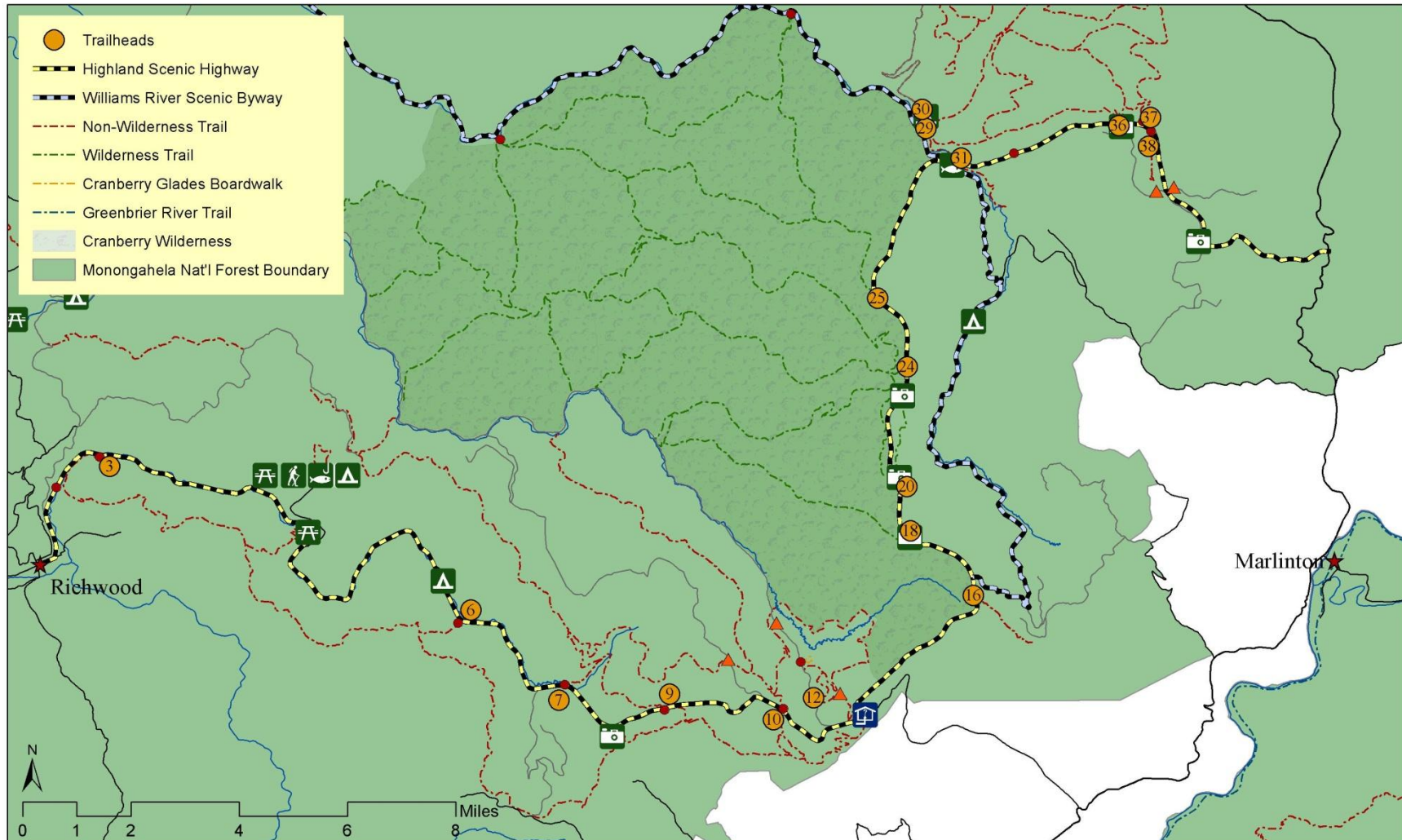


Figure 8. Geographic Locations of Trailheads.



Site 3: Fork Mountain Trailhead

Because this trailhead is tied to the Gateway Trail, the same double-panel layout could be used. The same information from the Gateway Trailhead that focuses on subtheme 2 should be included. The map should focus on the entire length of the Fork Mountain Trail and specific information about that trail should be included. (see *subtheme 2 [b]*)

Site 6: Big Run Trailhead

Currently, no developed parking exists at the trail's terminus on WV 39. A small 2-3 car parking area could be developed with a single-panel vertical trailhead display installed. Basic trail information and a brief historical look into the log plume that was located there during the early logging days should be included. (see *subtheme 1 [b]*)

Site 7: Eagle Camp Trailhead

Although currently a trailhead for Eagle Camp, this site would also lend itself well to an historical site dedicated to the local CCC camps including the one that was located here during the New Deal era. Refer visitors to other nearby CCC sites including Woodbine, Black Mountain Fire Trail, Red Spruce Knob Trail, Watoga State Park, and Droop Mountain State Park. This interpretation should be on display in an additional single-panel, angled sign located in a way to not detract from the site's function as a trailhead. (see *subtheme 1 [c]*)

Site 9: Pocahontas Trailhead (WV-39)

Due to length of this trail, brief description of the various forest cover types and microclimate changes along the way that influence what vegetative communities exist there should be included in the single- panel vertical display for the trailhead. Suggested loops and additional access points should also be described. (see *subtheme 2 [a]*)



Figure 9. Thomas Reserve Trailhead can serve other area trails.

Site 10: Kennison Mountain Trailhead

Kennison Mountain Trail would be an excellent setting to describe wildlife management and the concern with sensitive, threatened, and endangered species. In addition, a brief overview of red spruce forests and how they were once wide-spread and now restricted to the high elevations, such as those on Kennison Mountain and along the HSH should be included. This information should be developed into a single-panel vertical display. (see *subtheme 2 [a & b]*)

Site 12: Thomas Reserve Trailhead

This trailhead will serve as an information center for the series of looping trails that are found near the junction of WV 150 and WV 39. Parking should be expanded to



accommodate 3-4 vehicles. Because of the high concentration of interpretive opportunities in this area, this site should function as an orientation to Charles Creek, Thomas Reserve, Bruffey Reserve, and Cowpasture Trails. It should, however, refer visitors to nearby opportunities to learn about the Forest, its fascinating history, and management practices that guide its future. This information should be developed into a single-panel vertical display.

Site 16: High Rocks Trailhead

Along with the required basic trail information, a brief description of the geology should be included in a single-panel vertical display. At the overlook, an additional sign should be installed to help visitors identify features and mountains in the viewshed. (see *subtheme 3 [c]*)

Site 18: Forks of Cranberry Trailhead (Wilderness); Site 24: North-South Trailhead (Wilderness); Site 25: North Fork Trailhead (Wilderness)

Attracting visitors from around the country, the Cranberry Wilderness is rich in history, as well as beauty. While the new trailhead displays provide much needed information for those enter the Wilderness area, some additional topics could be included or elaborated on—historical railroad grades that some of the trails follow, the timber that was removed from this hard-to-reach area, and how the replenished forest provides a variety of ecosystem services. These considerations as well as the incorporation of thematic colors and fonts should be integrated into future displays. (see *subtheme 1 [b], 2 [b & c]*)

Site 20: Black Mountain Trailhead (Williams River and Big Spruce Overlooks)

Black Mountain Trail is unique in the sense that it is almost equally divided into front country trail management and wilderness management. This offers an opportunity to educate visitors about the difference in these two management strategies and how wilderness restricts some types of recreational use to offer a more primitive experience for visitors. A single-panel vertical display should be installed at the access point located at Williams River Valley Overlook and at the sign where the trail merges with the Black Mountain Fire Trail boardwalk. A wilderness boundary sign should be installed at the trail access point on the Wilderness-side of the trail to notify visitors that they are entering a different management area with restricted use and no formal trail blazing. (see *subtheme 2 [b]*)

Site 29: Williams River/Tea Creek Trailhead

From Tea Creek Campground, visitors can access both trails from a single trailhead. Aside from basic trail and area information, an interpretive section of the sign should be dedicated to the rich history related to historical logging camps, railroads, and the Tea Creek fire. A double-panel vertical display is currently being developed and will be adapted to meet the needs of this interpretive plan. (see *subtheme 1 [a & c]*)

Site 30: Bannock Shoals Trailhead

A double-panel vertical display should include all basic trail and area information. A brief note to visitors that FR 135 was created from a historic railroad grade by the Black Mountain CCC



should be included. Once an open road, this route connected Tea Creek Campground to the top of Gauley Mountain. It was greatly impacted by the Flood of 1985. The rushing waters washed out major culverts and drainage structures. Damage was so great that the Forest Service decided to maintain it only as a trail and close it to vehicular traffic. (see *subtheme 1 [b & c]* and/or *2 [a]*)

Site 31: Williams River Trailhead (HSH); Site 37: Gauley Mountain Trailhead

Recently installed, these trailheads share information about the logging history of each site. The section of the Williams River that visitors first see as they access the trail from the HSH trailhead is known as ‘Dead waters’. A brief history of the splash dam that was located there as well as a note that the trail follows a historic railroad line is included in the trailhead display. The Gauley Mountain Trail also follows a railroad grade. The trailhead display gives a brief history of the pre-USFS ownership, logging, and railroad history of the trail.

As replacements are needed, the color scheme and fonts should be changed to meet the standards described in this plan. (see *subtheme 1 [b]*)

Site 36: Tea Creek Mountain/Right Fork of Tea Creek Trailhead

In addition to the basic trail information, the double-panel vertical display should compare and contrast the two types of environments through which these trails traverse. A note that the Tea Creek Mountain Trail was constructed by the Black Mountain CCC as a fire trail and that a wooden fire tower was constructed along the trail would be a good tie to post-logging history of the area. (see *subtheme 1 [c]*)

Site 38: Red Spruce Knob Trailhead

As with the recently installed Williams River and Gauley Mountain Trailhead displays, Red Spruce Knob Trailhead offers historical information about the fire tower that was built and staffed by the Black Mountain CCC men in the 1930s. As replacements are needed, the color scheme and fonts should be updated to be consistent with those specified in this plan. An additional interpretive sign should be developed and installed at the fire tower’s foundation. The storyline should focus on the life of CCC enrollees and the role that they played in fire suppression. (see *subtheme 1 [c]*)

Scenic Byway Signage

All entrance signs, trailhead signs, and information boards should have the HSH logo routed placard installed just below the base of the main display board on the right supporting post. Logos for the WV Scenic Byway designation, National Scenic Byway, and National Forest Scenic Byway designations (See HSH CMP Figure 27) should be visible when entering the HSH from any of the portal sites, such as the Gauley Ranger District Office outdoor kiosk, the CMNC, and the US 219 Gateway. If applicable at any site, other national or state designations should be incorporated into the display/signage.



Additional brochures, maps, and electronic media

To help guide visitors on their journey across the HSH, mile markers representing the HSH logo should be installed beginning at the Richwood gateway. These markers will serve as landmarks to assist in sharing interpretation as specified in brochures and other media. Planning and installation should be coordinated with the West Virginia Division of Highway.

HSH Visitor's Guide

To help market the HSH and the communities of Richwood, Hillsboro, and Marlinton, a detailed guide should be developed to provide information about recreational opportunities and locations of interpretive sites based on subtheme. It would also provide an outlet to provide more details about storylines that may have not have been formally developed at sites along the HSH. This publication would help further develop partnerships with local visitor centers, businesses, and organizations, such as Pocahontas County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Tear-off map of HSH, highlighting interpretive sites and attractions

Similar to the Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Center produced tear-off map of the County, an 11"x17" map of the HSH should be developed and available at the local Richwood and Marlinton Visitors Centers, as well at the CMNC, and the Ranger District Offices. Other venues supporting tourism in these and surrounding counties should be distribution points as well. Information about the HSH, attractions, community information and annual events, and interpretive sites should be included. Suggested itinerary could be broken into one-day and weekend trips.

Children's Environmental Education

To encourage interaction with attractions and natural features along the HSH, a series of youth-friendly brochures should be developed that would act as a guided 'scavenger hunt' or activity sheet for families with children, school groups, Boys/Girls Scouts, and other similar organizations touring the area. Brochures should be broken down into age groups: Ages 4-7, Ages 8-10, and Ages 11-15.

Additional brochures

Based on the storylines carried throughout the span of the HSH, brochures for specific topics depicted at sites could be developed as funding and staffing allows—early settlements and cultural background of the history, logging and historical railroads, current management of this second growth forest, common flora and fauna of the Forest, recreation along the HSH, value of conservation and preservation, 'Birthplace of Rivers', threats to forest health, and places to learn about geology.

Audio Tour

To offer unique interpretive opportunities, an audio tour should be developed to highlight the storylines that are carried across the HSH. Visitors could select from the subthemes depending on what topics they would like to explore—settlement history and culture, logging and railroads, and influences on forest development/health and the importance of sound



management practices. All Priority I sites should be considered for as audio features, as well as the below potential topics:

- Shearer Grazing Allotment
- Pearl S. Buck
- Hammons family
- Logging: the life of a logger, different logging camps
- Spruce ecosystem and restoration
- Civilian Conservation Corps
- Wildfire Role & History: Fire tower / fire histories/values of natural fires
- Non-native Invasive Species
- Bear Sanctuary

Website

A website dedicated to the Highway should be developed to offer access to printable brochures, maps, and audio files. Website appearance should reflect the thematic ideas, fonts, and colors. The website should provide links to partnering organizations and provide information or links about nearby area attractions such as the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace and Watoga State Park.



Section 7 Evaluating success of interpretation

Inappropriate or ineffective displays can become costly investments. They may attract vandalism, reflect poorly on the site, or result in low use. Prior to final publication, interpretive materials should be reviewed by interested parties, specialists, and recreation site management. If a HSH Steering Committee has been established, this should be one of their responsibilities. A fresh set of eyes can do wonders to catch typos, poor formatting, and other common errors. Additional things to consider when developing interpretive materials are included in Section 9.

After installation, a variety of methods should be used to understand how visitors are reacting to newly installed interpretation. It would be ideal to conduct a study of the HSH visitors, their satisfaction with site quality, as well as interpretation, granted there is Forest/agency approval and funding becomes available in the future. Other informal and formal evaluation techniques will provide some information at the site-specific level.

Informal Methods

On-site observations and informal conversations with visitors can give a lot of information about their satisfaction with newly developed interpretation. Whenever possible field notes should be taken to record these events so that trends could be established. Much insight could be gathered at the CMNC because of the higher probability for interaction with visitors.

Formal Methods

Small cardstock comment cards should be available at the Marlinton RD and Gauley RD Offices, as well as at the CMNC, to encourage visitors to relay their comments about interpretation as each Priority stage is completed. A comment section on the newly developed website will also allow visitors to provide feedback about the HSH and interpretation.

As previously mentioned, if funding and administrative support for a HSH Visitor Survey is established, a section of the questionnaire should be dedicated to visitor's reactions to new interpretive opportunities.

Addressing Issues

If unforeseen problems with accessibility arise, they should be addressed as soon as possible. If certain qualities are found to be more attractive or not very appealing, those characteristics should be considered in the development of future interpretation. The first attempts can always be improved in the future.



Section 8 References

Literature Cited

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Section 9 Additional Considerations

Comprehensive Site Recommendations and Prioritization

The below provides an at a glance view of all existing and potential interpretive sites along the HSH.

Table 6. List of Recommended Interpretive Sites.

Number	Site	Priority	Site Type	Existing Interpretation	Interpretive Method Recommendations	List of Graphic Needs	Themes
1	Gateway Trailhead	1	Trailhead	No	Double-panel trailhead display	Trail info, photos	General Info, 2b, c
2	Gauley Ranger District Office	1	Portal	Yes	Replace three panel kiosk and update signs	HSH map, nearby attractions, photos, seasonal info	Orientation, All
3	Fork Mountain Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	See Gateway Trailhead	See Gateway Trailhead	General Info, 2b
4	Summit Lake Recreation Area	2	Multiple use	No	Interpretive trail, update information boards	Incorporate existing graphics	2, 3
5	North Bend Picnic Area/North Bend Trail	2	Day-Use Area	No	Two interpretive signs, audio tour	Historic photos of settlement, logging, railroad operations	1
6	Big Run Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Single-panel trailhead display	Trail info, log plume photos	General Info, 1b
7	Eagle Camp Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Single-panel trailhead display	Trail info, CCC	General Info, 1c
8	Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area	1	Interp. Trail	Yes	Update interpretive trail and three panel kiosk, brochure, audio tour	Various	3a, 3b, 3c
9	Pocahontas Trailhead (WV-39 access)	4	Trailhead	No	Single-panel trailhead display	Trail info	General Info, 2a
10	Kennison Mountain Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Single-panel trailhead display	Trail info, red spruce info	General Info 2a, 2b
11	Cranberry Glades Botanical Area	1	Interp. Trail	Yes	Updated interpretive trail, trailhead information board, audio tour, brochure	Various	2a, 2b, 3c
12	Thomas Reserve Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Single-panel trailhead display	Trail info	General Info
13	Cranberry Mountain Nature Center	1	Portal	Yes	Replace kiosk and update information	HSH map, nearby attractions, photos, seasonal info	Orientation, All
14	Cranberry Mountain Nature Trail	3	Interp. Trail	Yes	Update interpretive signs	Incorporate existing graphics	2c
15	Mill Point Prison Interpretive Trail	3	Interp. Trail	Yes	Update interpretive signs, audio tour	Incorporate existing graphics	1c



Number	Site	Priority	Site Type	Existing Interpretation	Interpretive Method Recommendations	List of Graphic Needs	Themes
16	High Rocks Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Single-panel trailhead display, single-panel display	Trail info, geology, viewshed feature photo	General Info, 3c
17	Cranberry Glades Overlook Trail	2	Interp. Trail	No	Two interpretive signs, audio tour	Photos from overlook, geology and hydrology of Glades	2b, 2c, 3b, 3c
18	Forks of Cranberry Trailhead	4	Wilderness Trailhead	Yes	Incorporate info in to existing Wilderness trailhead kiosk	Historic railroad and logging maps or photos	General Info, 1b, 2b, 2c
19	Williams River Valley Overlook	1	Overlook	Yes	Single angled interpretive panoramic sign	Incorporate existing graphics	2c, 3b
20	Black Mountain Trailhead (Williams River Valley Overlook and Big Spruce Overlook)	4	Wilderness Trailhead	No	Single-panel vertical display at Williams, Wilderness boundary sign	Trail/Wilderness info	General Info, 2b
21	Undeveloped Pull-off on WV150	3	Single Interp. Site	No	Single angled interpretive sign	Historic wildfire photos, geology diagram	1c, 3c
22	Big Spruce Overlook	1	Overlook	Yes	Single angled interpretive panoramic sign	Incorporate existing graphics	1b, 1c, 2b
23	Black Mountain Interpretive Trail	2	Interp. Trail	Yes	Replace signs to meet media and architectural guidelines	Incorporate existing graphics	1b, 1c
24	North-South Trailhead	4	Wilderness Trailhead	No	Incorporate info in to existing Wilderness trailhead kiosk	Historic railroad and logging maps or photos	General Info, 1b, 2b, 2c
25	North Fork Trailhead	4	Wilderness Trailhead	No	Incorporate info in to existing Wilderness trailhead kiosk	Historic railroad and logging maps or photos	General Info, 1b, 2b, 2c
26	Williams River Fishing Pier*	2	Single Interp. Site	No	Multiple interpretive panels, audio tour	Various	All
27	Day Run Campground	3	Multi-use	No	Interpretive trail, multiple signs	Historic photos of logging camp, CCC, railroad operations, map of Williams River watershed/topography	All
28	Tea Creek Campground	3	Multi-use	No	Interpretive trail, multiple signs	Historic logging, settlement or recreation photos, area map	All
29	Williams River/Tea Creek Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Double-panel vertical display	Under development by Forest Service	1a, 1c
30	Bannocks Shoals Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Double-panel vertical display	Trail information/map, photos of	General Info, 1b, 1c,



Number	Site	Priority	Site Type	Existing Interpretation	Interpretive Method Recommendations	List of Graphic Needs	Themes
						historic logging railroad grade and Black Mountain CCC crew	2a
31	Williams River Trailhead (HSH)	4	Trailhead	Yes	Replace as needed, meeting media and architectural guidelines	Incorporate existing graphics	General Info, 1b
32	Williams River Trail	2	Interp. Trail	No	Interpretive trail with grouping of signs	Wildlife photos and habitat	2b
33	Honeycomb Rocks Interpretive Trail*	3	Interp. Trail	Yes	Replace as needed, meeting media and architectural guidelines	Incorporate existing graphics	3c
34	Little Laurel Overlook	1	Overlook	Yes	Single angled interpretive panoramic sign	Incorporate existing graphics	2b
35	Tea Creek Meadow Interpretive Trail	2	Interp. Trail	Yes	Replace and update signs along interpretive trail	Photos of species associated with meadow community	2b, 2c
36	Tea Creek Mountain/Right Fork of Tea Creek Trailhead	4	Trailhead	No	Double-panel vertical display	Trail info, CCC, fire tower photos	General Info, 1c
37	Gauley Mountain Trailhead	4	Trailhead	Yes	Replace as needed, meeting media and architectural guidelines	Incorporate existing graphics	General Info, 1b
38	Red Spruce Knob Trail	4	Trailhead	Yes	Replace as needed, meeting media and architectural guidelines	Incorporate existing graphics	General Info, 1c
39	Red Lick Overlook	1	Overlook	No	Single angled interpretive panoramic sign	Panoramic of viewshed	2a, 2c
40	Shearer Run South Grazing Allotment	3	Single Interp. Site	No	Single sign, audio tour	Historic and current photos	1, 2b
41	US-219 Gateway	1	Portal	Yes	Three-panel kiosk signs need to be updated,	HSH map, nearby attractions, photos, seasonal info	Orientation, All



Accessibility Considerations and Suggestions

Please note that all signage, brochures, and written material should be available in audio format and large print upon the request of the public to meet accessibility needs of visually-impaired or hearing-impaired individuals.

The 1968 Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require all new or updated facilities/structures to meet the accessibility standards established in the American Disability Act/ABA guidelines. Refer to the Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) for guidance.

Adapted from the Guanella Pass Scenic and Historic Byway Revised Interpretive Plan (2008), additional considerations include:

1. Involve people with disability in planning and design.
2. Include captioning on all films/videos. Captioning must be visible when video is shown in public.
3. Make brochures available in alternate formats, including large print (18 point/0.25" minimum height), and available in audio and computer disc format
4. Make web sites fully accessible in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
5. Offer an accessibility guide, available in alternative formats, and include the guide on your website
6. Make sure all signage related to accessibility are appropriately posted and use appropriate language and terminology (i.e. "Accessible Parking" rather than "Handicap Parking").
7. Use audio description in high use areas where visual media tells the story
8. Provide written scripts wherever audio information is presented
9. Create accessible routes to exhibits
10. Display content of information redundantly or in part –aurally, tactually, and visually.
11. Eliminate obstructions to viewing exhibits (i.e. high pedestals, railings, etc.)
12. Use high contrast colors and matte or low glass finish
13. Use large sans or slab serif, high contrast print
14. All materials for distribution or examination are to be within the reach ranges stated in the accessibility guidelines –maximum forward reach of 48", maximum side reach of 48". All controls must be operable with one closed fist and a force no greater than 5 pounds.
15. Consider the "Cone of Vision" that will be the most visible to the most people, with midpoint of visual material falling at 48" from ground.

ADA/ABA Accessibility Guidelines: <http://www.access-board.gov> and HSH CMP Project Record CDIAccessibilityGuidelines.pdf



General Rules on Updating and Design

Additional suggestions and things to consider:

- Ask for help, suggestions, and expertise as needed.
- Ask for multiple fresh eyes to double-check for typos, grammatical errors, and confusing sentences.
- Font size can restrict accessibility! Follow guidelines provided in the Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guideline (FSORAG).
- Use language that everyone can understand and avoid technical jargon.
- Do NOT use hyphenation (turn 'Auto-hyphenation' OFF).
- Utilize Rule of Thirds: 1/3 Text, 1/3 Graphics, 1/3 White Space
- Interpretive displays should use a variety of language to encourage the viewer to continue reading (i.e. making the theme personal and relevant to the viewer, use descriptive words, add humor, use an example or compare theme to other common items, use similes and metaphors, paint a visual picture with words, etc.).
- Consider the idea developed by George Miller in 1956 (as adapted from Ham, 1992): On average people are capable of making sense of only 7+/- 2 ideas at a time. Under the main topic of a sign, presentation, or other interpretive material, organize subthemes in a way that doesn't overwhelm the viewer and limit the amount of information you are trying to portray at a single site to hold their attention.
- Refer to HSH CMP Project File CD\InterpMediaDesignGuidelines.pdf